

Vivekananda WRITES TO YOU

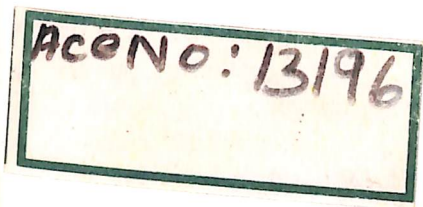
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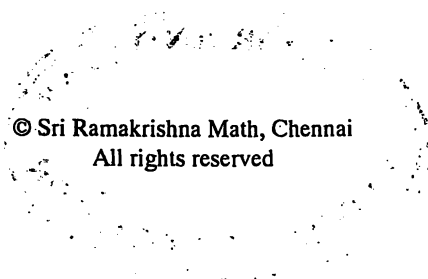
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VIVEKANANDA WRITES TO YOU



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Publisher's Note

“Vivekananda's words are great music, phrases in the style of Beethoven, stirring rhythms like the march of Handel choruses. I cannot touch these sayings of his, scattered as they are through the pages of books at thirty years' distance, without receiving a thrill through my body like an electric shock. And what shocks, what transports must have been produced when in burning words they issued from the lips of the hero!” says the great French savant, Romain Rolland.

Swami Vivekananda was as inspired a writer as a speaker. In his innumerable letters to his disciples, admirers, friends and acquaintances, he has poured out his burning heart in unforgettable phrases. They might have been written to contemporary personages, but the potency and the relevance of their appeal are not dimmed by time or distance. His letters are as much for every one of us as for those whom he specifically addressed. Here are some gems from his letters gathered mainly from the “Complete Works of Swami

Vivekananda" published by the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati. If only we can catch a spark from this roaring flame, our lives will stand transformed and the nation will take great strides in the path of glory to which She is surely destined.

Vijayadasami, 1976.

PUBLISHER

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Vivekananda writes to you

Be moral. Be brave. Be a heartwhole man. Strictly moral, brave unto desperation. Don't bother your head with religious theories. Only cowards sin, brave men never; no, not even in mind. Try to love anybody and everybody.

Be a *man* and try to make those immediately under your care, brave, moral and sympathising. No religion for you, my children, but morality and bravery. No cowardice, no sin, no crime, no weakness—the rest will come of itself.

Everything here appears good, the people are all gentlemen, but very much Westernized; and I am so thoroughly against every affectation of the Western idea.

What a frippery civilization is it indeed that the foreigners have brought over here! What a materialistic illusion have they created! May Vishwanatha save these weak-hearted!

Alas for the irony of our fate, that in this land of Bhagavan Shuka's birth renunciation is looked down upon as madness and sin!

Everyone can play the role of a master, but it is very difficult to be a servant.

Know it for certain that without steady devotion for the Guru, and unflinching patience and perseverance, nothing is to be achieved.

You must have strict morality. Deviate an inch from this and you are gone for ever.

Buddha's greatness lies in his unrivalled sympathy. His intellect and heart have never since been paralleled throughout the history of the world.

The religion of Buddha has reared itself on the Upanishads, and upon that also the philosophy of Shankara.

Lord Buddha is my Ishtam—my God. He preached no theory about Godhead—he was himself God.

No one has the power to put a limit to God's infinite glory. No, not even God

Himself has the power to make Himself limited.

My motto is to learn whatever good things I may come across anywhere. This leads many friends to think that it will take away from my devotion to the Guru. All Gurus are one, and are fragments and radiations of God, the Universal Guru.

The dwelling-place of the Jivatman, this body, is a veritable means of work, and he who converts this into an infernal den is guilty, and he who neglects it is also to blame.

Arise, ye mighty one, and be strong! Work on and on, struggle on and on!

Try to be pure and unselfish—that is the whole of religion.

My children, the secret of religion is not in theories but in practice. To be good and to do good—that is the whole of religion.

Don't be ruffled if now and then you get a brush from the world; it will be over in no time, and everything will be all right.

When, when, O Lord, shall man be brother to man?

Man learns as he lives, and experience is the greatest teacher in the world.

For us is only submission, calm and perfect. The soldier has no right to complain, nay murmur, if the General orders him into the cannon's mouth.

Always remember that we are but puppets in the Lord's hands. Remain pure always. Please take care not to become impure even in thought, as in speech and action; always try to do good to others as far as in you lies.

Read the Gita every day to the best of your opportunity.

India wants the sacrifice of at least a thousand of her young men—men, mind you, and not brutes.

Calm and silent and steady work, and no newspaper humbug, no name-making, you must always remember.

No great things were ever done without great labour.

The obverse is tryanny and the reverse slavery. The slave and the tyrant are synonymous.

This present state of things must be removed, not by destroying religion, but by following the great teachings of the Hindu faith, and joining with it the wonderful sympathy of that logical development of Hinduism—Buddhism.

The hope lies in you—in the weak, the lowly, but the faithful. I bequeath to you, young men, this symapthy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed.

We are the sons of Light and children of God. Glory unto the Lord, we will succeed.

March on, the Lord is our General.

The Hindu must not give up his religion, but must keep religion within its proper limit and give freedom to society to grow.

Freedom is the only condition of growth; take that off, the result is degeneration.

Love the poor, the miserable, the down-trodden, and the Lord will bless you.

Think not that you are poor; money is not power, but goodness, holiness.

Do you know who is the real Shakti-worshipper? It is he who knows that God is the Omnipresent Force in the Universe, and sees in women the manifestation of that Force.

Keep the motto before you, 'Elevation of the masses without injuring the religion'.

Remember that the nation lives in the cottage.

Can you raise the masses? Can you give them back their lost individuality without making them lose their innate spiritual nature?

Can you become an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work and energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts? This is to be done and *we will do it*. You are all *born to do it*.

Have faith in yourselves, great convictions are the mothers of great deeds.

The worshipping of the Guru is the first duty inculcated in the Vedas.

God can only be known in and through man.

Three things are necessary to make every man great, every nation great:

- (1) Conviction of the powers of goodness.
- (2) Absence of jealousy and suspicion.
- (3) Helping all who are trying to be and do good.

Every soul is a sun covered over with clouds of ignorance; the difference between soul and soul is due to the difference in density of these layers of clouds.

We have to give back to the nation its lost individuality and *raise the masses*.

No good thing can be done without obstruction. It is only those who persevere to the end that succeed.

I believe that the Satya-yuga will come when there will be one caste, one Veda, and peace and harmony. This idea of Satya-yuga is what would revivify India. Believe it.

Old Hinduism for ever!

Act on the educated young men, bring them together and organize them. Great things can be done by great sacrifices only.

Do not be proud; do not insist upon anything dogmatic; do not go against anything—ours is to put the chemicals together, the Lord knows how and when the crystal will form.

Believe, believe, the decree has gone forth, the fiat of the Lord has gone forth — India must rise, the masses and the poor are to be made happy. Rejoice.... The flood of spirituality has risen. I see it is rolling over the land, resistless, boundless, all-absorbing.

Do not try to lead your brethren, but serve them. The brutal mania for leading has sunk many a great ship in the waters of life.

If the mountain does not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. If the poor cannot come to education, education must reach them at the plough, in the factory, everywhere.

A piece of wood can be easily cut only along the grains. So the old Hinduism can be reformed only through Hinduism, and not through the new-fangled reform movements.

The educated of the world will come to believe in the eternity of both soul and creation, and in God as our highest and perfect nature, as taught in our holy Vedas.

This life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive.

Instead of materialising the spirit, i.e., dragging the spiritual to the material plane, convert the matter into spirit, catch a glimpse at least, every day, of that world of infinite beauty and peace and purity—the spiritual, and try to live in it day and night.

Seek not, touch not with your toes even, anything that is uncanny.

Do not go for glass beads leaving the mine of diamonds! This life is a great

chance....Seek for the highest, aim at the highest and you *shall* reach the highest.

Life is short! Give it up to a great cause.

Work hard. Be holy and pure, and the fire will come.

Nothing will be able to resist truth and love and sincerity. Are you sincere? Unselfish even unto death?—and loving? Then fear not, not even death. Onward, my lads!

The whole world requires Light. It is expectant! India alone has that Light, not in magic, mummeries and charlatanism, but in the teaching of the glories of the spirit of real religion—of the highest spiritual truth. That is why the Lord has preserved the race through all its vicissitudes unto the present day.

Have faith that you are all, my brave lads, born to do great things! Let not the barks of puppies frighten you, no, not even the thunderbolts of heaven, but stand up and work!

Is there a greater strength than that of Brahmacharyam—purity, my boy?

Cherish positive thoughts.

Great men are those who build highways for others with their heart's blood.

You must be all-forbearing, like Mother Earth.

I do not believe in a religion or God which cannot wipe the widow's tears or bring a piece of bread to the orphan's mouth.

Where should you go to seek for God; are not all the poor, the miserable, the weak, Gods? Why not worship them first?

Have you love? You are omnipotent. Are you perfectly unselfish? If so, you are irresistible.

Your country requires heroes; be heroes!

How many Buddhas die before one finds expression!

I believe in God and I believe in man. I believe in helping the miserable, I believe in going even to hell to save others.

No man, no nation, my son, can hate others and live. India's doom was sealed

the very day they invented the word Mlechchha and stopped from communion with others.

It is good to talk glibly about the Vedanta, but how hard to carry out even its least precepts!

Take care of these two things—love of power and jealousy. Cultivate always ‘faith in yourself.’

The fact of our isolation from all the other nations of the world is the cause of our degeneration, and its only remedy is getting back into the current of the rest of the world. Motion is the sign of life.

The only claim we (Indians) have, to be recognized by the world is our religion, and good specimens of our religious men are required to be sent abroad to give other nations an idea that India is not dead.

The secret of success of the Westerners is the power of organization and combination. That is only possible with mutual trust and co-operation and help.

I call him a traitor who, having been educated and nursed in luxury by the heart's blood of the downtrodden millions of the toiling poor, never even takes a thought for them.

A few thousand graduates do not make a nation; a few rich men do not make a nation.

The Lord's works have been always done by the lowly, by the poor.

None can hate others without degenerating himself.

Give and take is the law.

Expansion is life, contraction is death. Love is life and hatred is death.

Do any deserve liberty who are not ready to give it to others?

No power in the universe can withhold from any one anything he really deserves.

The past of India was great no doubt, but I sincerely believe that the future will be more glorious still.

May Sankara keep us steady in purity, patience, and perseverance. Nothing else

is necessary but these—*Love, Sincerity and Patience*.

What is life but growth, i.e., expansion, i.e., *love*? Therefore all love is life, it is the only law of life, all selfishness is *death*, and this is true here or hereafter. It is life to do good, it is death not to do good to others.

Feel, my children, feel; feel for the poor, the ignorant, the downtrodden, feel till the heart stops and the brain reels and you think you will go mad—then pour the soul out at the feet of the Lord and then will come power, help and indomitable energy.

Money does not pay, nor name; fame does not pay, nor learning. It is love that pays; it is character that cleaves its way through adamant walls of difficulties.

There cannot be any growth without *liberty*. Our ancestors freed religious thought, and we have a wonderful religion; but they put a heavy chain on the feet of society, and our society is, in a word,

horrid, diabolical. In the West, society always had freedom, and look at them. On the other hand, look at their religion.

I do not believe in a God who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven!

Root up priestcraft from the old religion, and you get the best religion in the world. Do you understand me? Can you make a European society with India's religion? I believe it is possible and must be.

Try to revive society on the old grounds of universal salvation and equality as laid down by the old Masters, such as Sankaracharya, Ramanuja and Chaitanya.

Work, work, for, to work only for the good of others is life.

Onward, my brave boys—money or no money—men or no men! Have you love? Have you God? Onward, and forward to the breach, you are irresistible.

Beware of everything that is untrue, stick to truth and we shall succeed, may be slowly, but surely.

Work as if on each of you depended the whole work. Fifty centuries are looking on you, the future of India depends on you. Work on.

The life of Sri Ramakrishna was an extraordinary search-light under whose illumination one is able to really understand the whole scope of Hindu religion.

The books were theories, Sri Ramakrishna was the realization.

Sri Ramakrishna had in fifty years lived the five thousand years of national spiritual life.

Matter does not prove Spirit.

Great things are done only by great sacrifices.

India can only rise by sitting at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna.

Pay no attention whatsoever to newspaper nonsense or criticism. Be sincere and do your duty. Everything will come all right. Truth must triumph.

Great sages came with special messages for the world, and not for name, but their

followers throw their teachings overboard and fight over their names—this is verily the history of the world.

The day of gossip and ceremonials is gone, my boy, *you must work now*.

We want some disciples—fiery young men,—do you see?—intelligent and brave, who dare to go to the jaws of Death, and are ready to swim across the ocean. Do you follow me? We want hundreds like that, both men and women.

The self-seeking man who is looking after his personal comforts and leading a lazy life—there is no room for him even in hell.

He alone is a child of Sri Ramakrishna who is moved to pity for all creatures and exerts himself for them even at the risk of incurring personal damnation.

Can a leader be made? A leader is born. And it is a very difficult task to take on the role of a leader. One must be a servant of servants and must accommodate a thousand minds. There must not

be a shade of jealousy or selfishness, then you are a leader.

Everything must be sacrificed, if necessary, for that one sentiment, *universality*.

The Gerua robe is not for enjoyment. It is the banner of heroic work.

You have read: Look upon your mother as God, look upon your father as God:—but I say: The poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted—let these be your God. Know that service to these alone is the highest religion.

Jealousy is the central vice of every enslaved race. And it is jealousy and the want of combination which cause and perpetuate slavery.

Stand firm like a rock. Truth always triumphs.

What India wants is a new electric fire to stir up a fresh vigour in the national veins.

One word of truth can never be lost, for ages it may be hidden under rubbish, but it will show itself sooner or later.

Give me a genuine man; I do not want masses of converts.

Let each one of us pray day and night for the downtrodden millions in India, who are held fast by poverty, priest-craft and tyranny—pray day and night for them.

I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. But I am poor, I love the poor.

Him I call a Mahatman whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a Duratman.

So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor, who having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them.

We are poor, my brothers, we are nobodies, but such have been always the instruments of the Most High.

The real spiritual man is broad everywhere. His love forces him to be so.

Those to whom religion is a trade are forced to become narrow and mischievous by their introduction into religion of the

competitive, fighting and selfish methods of the world.

Do not try to be a ruler. He is the best ruler, who can serve well.

My children must be ready to jump into fire, if needed, to accomplish their work.

Be positive, do not criticise others. Give your message: teach what you have to teach and there stop. The Lord knows the rest.

If you are really my children, you will fear nothing, stop at nothing. You will be like lions.

All great undertakings are achieved through mighty obstacles.

Use agreeable and wholesome language towards even the greatest enemy.

Sri Ramakrishna was the living commentary on the Vedas and to their aim. He lived in one life the whole cycle of the national religious existence in India.

Making Sri Sarada Devi the nucleus, once more will Gargis and Maitreyis be born into the world.

Neither money pays, nor name, nor fame, nor learning; it is character that can cleave through adamant walls of difficulties.

We have not done *badly* in the past, certainly not. Our society is not *bad* but *good*, only I want it to be better still.

Each nation has a main current in life, in India it is religion.

I do not care whether they are Hindus or Mohammedans or Christians, but those that love the Lord will always command my service.

That you may catch my fire, that you may be intensely sincere, that you may die the hero's death on the field of battle—is the constant prayer of—Vivekananda.

What I now want is a band of fiery missionaries.

The disciples of all the prophets have always inextricably mixed up the ideas of the Master with the *person* and at last killed the ideas for the *person*. The disciples of Sri Ramakrishna must guard against

doing the same thing. Work for the *idea* not the person.

I must keep my movement *pure* or I will have none of it.

The children of truth live for ever.

Meddle not with so-called social reform; for there cannot be any reform without spiritual reform first.

Do not lose heart, do not lose faith in your Guru, do not lose faith in God. So long as you possess these three, nothing can harm you.

Was it ever in the history of the world that any great work was done by the rich? It is the heart and the brain that do it ever and ever and not the purse.

Infinite faith and strength are the only conditions of success.

Know that talking ill of others in private is a sin. You must wholly avoid it.

Perfect sincerity, holiness, gigantic intellect and an all-conquering will—let only a handful of men work with these, and the whole world will be revolutionised.

Those who think that a little sugar-coating of untruth helps the spread of truth are mistaken, and will find in the long run that a single drop of poison poisons the whole mass.

Cultivate the virtue of obedience, but you must not sacrifice your own faith. No centralisation is possible unless there is obedience to superiors. No great work can be done without this centralisation of individual forces.

Give up jealousy and conceit. Learn to work unitedly for others. This is the great need of our country.

All of religion is contained in the Vedanta, that is, in the three stages of the Vedanta philosophy, the Dvaita, Vishistadvaita and Advaita; one comes after the other. These are the three stages of spiritual growth in man. Each one is necessary. This is the essential of religion.

Kill self first, if you want to succeed.

Men are more valuable than all the wealth of the world.

Infinite patience, infinite purity, and infinite perseverance are the secret of success in a good cause.

The less help from men, the more from the Lord.

Work on, my boy. Rome was not built in a day.

It is impossible to preach the catholic ideas of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and form sects at the same time.

Be brave, be brave, man dies but once. My disciples must not be cowards.

Each work has to pass through these stages—ridicule, opposition and then acceptance.

A few heart-whole, sincere, and energetic men can do more in a year than a mob in a century.

Advaita will be the future religion of thinking humanity. No doubt of that.

Neither numbers, nor powers, nor wealth, nor learning, nor eloquence, nor anything-else will prevail, but *purity, living the life*, in one word, anubhuti, realization.

Doctrines have been expounded enough. There are books by the million. Oh, for an ounce of practice!

We are the servants of that God who by the ignorant is called Man.

The older I grow the more I see behind the idea of the Hindus, that man is the greatest of all beings. So say the Moham-medans too.

This earth is higher than all heavens; this is the greatest school in the universe.

Man alone becomes God, and they (the Devas, the angels, the so-called higher beings) all have to become men again in order to become God.

So long as you have love for God and Guru, and faith in truth, nothing can hurt you, my son. But the loss of any of these is dangerous.

Truth is my God, the Universe my country.

God and truth are the only politics in the world, everything else is trash.

There is an ocean of difference between idleness and renunciation.

Go to hell yourself to buy salvation for others.

There is no distinction of sex in the soul.

The India that is to be, the future India, must be much greater than ancient India.

From the day Sri Ramakrishna was born dates the growth of Modern India and of the Golden Age.

Every action that helps a being manifest its divine nature more and more is *good*, every action that retards it is *evil*.

The only way of getting our divine nature manifested is by helping others do the same.

The poor, the down-trodden, the ignorant, let these be your God.

All expansion is life, all contraction is death. All love is expansion, all selfishness is contraction. Love is therefore the only law of life.

What the whole Hindu race has thought in ages, Sri Ramakrishna *lived* in one life. His life is the living commentary to the Vedas of all nations.

Great enterprise, boundless courage, tremendous energy and, above all, perfect obedience—these are the only traits that lead to individual and national regeneration.

Infinite power will come unto you—never fear. Be pure, have faith, be obedient.

I do not depend on men or things. The Lord alone I depend upon—and He works through me.

Guru-Bhakti is the foundation of all spiritual development.

The Guru-Bhakta will conquer the world—this is the one evidence of history.

The kingdom of heaven is already in existence if we will have it; perfection is already in man if he will see it.

Know partiality to be the chief cause of all evil.

Bear with everyone's shortcomings. Forgive offences by the million.

In all countries it is the middle classes that do all great works.

It is criticising each other that is at the

root of all mischief. That is the chief factor in breaking down organizations.

Only that kind of work which develops our spirituality is work. Whatever fosters materiality is no-work.

There is no chance for the welfare of the world, unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing.

My first endeavour is to start a Math for women. This Math shall be the origin of Gargis and Maitreyis, and women of even higher attainments than these.

No great work can be achieved by humbug. It is through Love, a passion for Truth, and tremendous energy, that all undertakings are accomplished.

Combine seriousness with child-like naivete. Live in harmony with all. Give up all idea of egoism, and entertain no sectarian views. Useless wrangling is a great sin.

Work on with the intrepidity of a lion but at the same time with the tenderness of a flower.

Individuality is my motto. I have no ambition beyond training individuals up.

I am a Sannyasin, as such I consider myself as a servant, not as a master in the world.

It is that eternal love, unruffled equanimity under all circumstances, and perfect freedom from jealousy or animosity that will tell. That will tell, nothing else.

What will the poor householders do, with their little bits of life? It is for the Sannyasins, Shiva's demons, to rend the skies with their shouts of 'Hara Hara Shambo!'

I must keep my movement *pure* or I will have none.

Want of sympathy and lack of energy are at the root of all misery, and you must therefore give these two up.

It is indeed very difficult to have an equal love for all, but without it there is no Mukti.

I want to give dry, hard reason, softened in the sweetest syrup of love and made

spicy with intense work, and cooked in the kitchen of Yoga, so that even a baby can easily digest it.

The only hope of India is from the masses.

Mind, so long you have faith in your Guru, nothing will be able to obstruct your way.

Remember, it is the *person*, the life, which is the secret of power—nothing else.

It is very easy to search for faults, but the characteristic of a saint lies in looking for merits.

The masses will always have the *person*, the higher ones, the *principle*. We want both. But principles are universal, *not* persons.

Truce to all quarrels and jealousies and bigotry! These will spoil everything.

No doubt it is an evil to be bounded by laws, but it is necessary at the immature stage to be guided by rules; in other words, as the Master used to say, the sapling must be hedged round.

Tale-bearing, caballing or reporting scandals about others should be altogether eschewed.

For the ordinary man and the beginner, steady devotion (*Nishtha*) to an ideal is of paramount importance.

He who is the servant of all is the true master. He never becomes a leader, in whose love there is a consideration of high or low. He whose love knows no end, and never stops to consider high or low, has the whole world lying at his feet.

Aye, for a dozen bold hearts, large, noble and sincere.

My ideal indeed can be put into a few words and that is: to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life.

The world is in chains of superstition. I pity the oppressed, whether man or woman, and I pity more the oppressors.

Misery is caused by *ignorance* and nothing else.

What the world wants is character.

The world is in need of those whose life is one burning love, selfless. That love will make every word tell like thunderbolt.

Awake, awake great one! The world is burning with misery. Can you sleep?

We want great spirit, tremendous energy and boundless enthusiasm, no womanishness will do.

Organization is power, and the secret of it is obedience.

Spiritual ideals have always come from the downtrodden. The Jews overwhelmed the Roman Empire with their spiritual ideals.

Nations, like individuals, must help themselves. This is real patriotism.

Nothing can resist truth.

Work on, brave hearts, fail not—no saying 'nay'; work on—the Lord is behind the work. *Mahashakti* is with you.

Our countrymen must remember that in things of the spirit we and not foreigners are the teachers, but in things of the world we ought to learn from them.

Work on! Hold on! Be brave! Dare anything and everything!

We Vedantists in every difficulty ought to ask the subjective questions, 'Why do I see that? Why can I not conquer this with love?'

The road to Good is the roughest and steepest in the universe.

Character has to be established through a thousand stumbles.

It is renunciation, Tyaga, that is meant by religion, and nothing else.

It is for the sinful that the Lord manifests Himself specially, not so much for the virtuous.

Let distinctions of sex, caste, wealth, learning and the whole host of them which are so many gateways to hell, be confined to the world alone. If such distinctions persist in holy places of pilgrimage, where then lies the difference between them and hell itself? "

Whatever you do, let that be your worship for the time.

Work on unto death—I am with you, and when I am gone, my spirit will work with you.

Be you holy and above all, sincere and do not for a moment give up your trust in the Lord and you will see the light.

Whatever is truth will remain for ever; whatever not, none can preserve.

Whatever others think or do, lower not your standard of purity, morality and love of God; above all, beware of all secret organizations.

No one who loves God need fear any jugglery. Holiness is the highest and divinest power in earth and in heaven.

In dream our souls read a layer of our mind which we do not read in our waking hours, and however unsubstantial the imagination may be, it is behind the imagination that all unknown psychic truths lie.

Do not be anxious, do not be in a hurry. Slow, persistent and silent work does everything.

Marriage is the truest goal for ninety-

WRITES TO YOU

nine per cent of the human race, and they will live the happiest life as soon as they have learnt and are ready to abide by the eternal lesson—that we are bound to bear and forbear and that life to every one must be a compromise.

Perfect life is a contradiction in terms. Therefore we must always expect to find things not up to our highest ideal. Knowing this we are bound to make the best of everything.

What I want is muscles of iron and nerves of steel, inside which dwells a mind of the same material as that of which the thunderbolt is made. Strength, manhood, Kshatra-Virya and Brahma-Teja.

No need of looking behind, FORWARD! We want infinite energy, infinite zeal, infinite courage and infinite patience, then only will great things be achieved.

You know my settled doctrine. I do not trust any one who has not conquered lust and gold.

Make a blaze. Make a blaze!

I am a socialist, not because I think it is a perfect system, but half a loaf is better than no bread.

The sum total of good and evil in the world remains ever the same. The yoke will be lifted from shoulder to shoulder by new systems, that is all.

My interests are *international* and not Indian alone.

Gratitude and hospitality are the peculiar characteristics of Indian humanity.

Music is the highest art, and to those who understand, it is the highest worship.

It is the hero alone, not the coward who has liberation within his easy reach.

Good motives, sincerity and infinite love can conquer the world. One single soul possessed of these virtues can destroy the dark designs of millions of hypocrites and brutes.

Expansion is the sign of life and we must spread over the world with our spiritual ideals.

Material science can only give worldly

prosperity, whilst spiritual science is for eternal life.

India is already Ramakrishna's, whether I live a few years more or not. (This was written in 1897).

Acceptance, love, toleration for everything sincere and honest—but never for hypocrisy.

The Upanisads and the Gita are the true scriptures—Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Chaitanya, Nanak, Kabir and so on are the true Avataras; for they had their hearts broad as the sky;—and above all, Ramakrishna.

It is in the books written by priests that madnesses like that of caste are to be found, and not in books revealed from God.

Work, work, work—I care for nothing else. Work, work, work, even unto death.

It is the heart, the heart, that conquers, not the brain.

This indeed is worship, worship of the Lord in the human tabernacle.

I am a fighter and shall die in the battle-field.

I find, as I always thought, that it is through the *heart* and that alone, that the world can be reached.

The body must go, no mistake about that. Why then let it go in idleness? Don't be anxious; even when I die, my very bones will work miracles.

It is man that makes everything, what can money do?

As Jiva and Ishvara are in essence the same, serving the Jivas and loving God must mean one and the same thing.

When you serve a Jiva with the idea that he is a Jiva, it is Daya (compassion) and not Prema (love); but when you serve him with the idea that he is the Self, that is Prema.

For us, Advaitists, this notion of Jiva as distinct from God is the cause of bondage. For us, it is not to pity but to serve.

What we want is Dynamic Religion.

May I be born again and again, and suffer thousands of miseries, so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of all souls; and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship.

The power behind me is not Vivekananda but He, the Lord, and He knows best.

Every new thought must create opposition—in the civilized a polite sneer, in the vulgar savage howls and filthy scandals.

This hideous world is Maya. Renounce and be happy. Give up the idea of sex and possessions. There is no other bond.

Kindness and love can buy you the whole world; lectures and books and philosophy—all stand lower than these.

The children of the Lord are dying of starvation.... Worship with water and tulasi leaves alone, and let the allowance for His Bhoga (food offerings) be spent in offering food to the living God who dwells

in the persons of the poor—then will His grace descend on everything.

What we want are brave young men, who will work; not tomfools.

All the wealth of the world cannot help one little Indian village, if the people are not taught to help themselves. Our work should be mainly *educational*, both moral and intellectual.

Even the greatest fool can accomplish a task, if it be after his heart. But the intelligent man is he who can convert every work into one that suits his taste. No work is petty.

I want each one of my children to be a hundred times greater than I could ever be. Everyone of you *must be great—must*, that is my word.

Obedience, readiness, and love for the cause—if you have these three, nothing can hold you back.

To do good, perfect unselfishness is absolutely necessary.

Some people do the best work when *led*.

Not every one is *born to lead*. The best leader, however, is one who 'leads like the baby'. The baby, though apparently depending on every one, is the king of the household.

A leader must be impersonal.

There is but One, seen by the ignorant as matter, by the wise as God.

Too much sentiment hurts work. 'Hard as steel and soft as a flower' is the motto.

To advance oneself towards freedom physical, mental and spiritual, and help others to do so is the supreme prize of man.

We want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Veda nor the Bible nor the Koran; yet this has to be done by harmonising the Veda, the Bible and the Koran.

For our own motherland, a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam—Vedanta brain and Islam body is the only hope.

Both attachment and detachment perfectly developed make a man great and happy.

The greatness of little things, that is what the Gita teaches, bless the old book!

May all powers come unto you! May Mother Herself be your hands and mind! It is immense power—irresistible—that I pray for you, and, if possible, along with it infinite peace.... If there was any truth in Sri Ramakrishna, may He take you into His leading, even as He did me, nay, a thousand times more!

If in this hell of a world one can bring a little joy and peace even for a day into the heart of a single person, that much alone is true; this I have learnt after suffering all my life; all else is mere moonshine.

The secret of life is not enjoyment, but education through experience. The one great gain in life is love, blessed is he who gets it.

Those institutions should be encouraged by which men advance in the path of freedom.

In the preliminary state, the form of the Guru is to be meditated upon by the disciple.

Gradually it is to be merged in the Ishta. By Ishta is meant the object of love and devotion....It is very difficult to superimpose divinity on man, but one is sure to succeed by repeated efforts. God is in every man, whether man knows it or not; your loving devotion is bound to call up the divinity in him.

Then only will India awake, when hundreds of large-hearted men and women, giving up all desires of enjoying the luxuries of life, will long and exert themselves to their utmost for the well-being of the millions of their countrymen who are gradually sinking lower and lower in the vortex of destitution and ignorance.

Madras will then awake, when at least one hundred of its very heart's blood, in the form of its educated young men, will stand aside from the world, gird their loins, and be ready to fight the battle of truth, marching on from country to country.

This life comes and goes—wealth, fame, enjoyments are only of a few days. It

Facsimile of a Letter by Swami Vivekananda

Los Angeles
California
28th Jan 1890

To
H. Venkataswami Sankarar Temple
Vijay. Society

Dear Sir -

Many thanks for your kind words
and accept my congratulations for
your success in finding a country for the
propagation of these religions.

May all success crown your efforts -
With thanks & good wishes from the
members I remain

Yours sincerely

Vivekananda

Transcript of the letter

Los Angeles

California.

23rd Jan., 1900

To

K. Venkataswami Naidoo,
President, Viv-Society.

DEAR SIR,

Many thanks for your kind words to me. Accept my congratulations for your success in founding a society for the propagation of Vedic religion.

May all blessings crown your efforts.

With thanks and good wishes to all the members,

I remain,

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

is better, far better to die on the field of duty, preaching the truth, than to die like a worldly worm. Advance!

But you must not depend on any *foreign help*. Nations, like individuals, must help themselves. This is real patriotism, If a nation cannot do that, its time has not yet come. It must wait. It is from Madras that the new light *must* spread all over India. With this end you must work.

Go on bravely. Do not expect success in a day or a year. Always hold on to the highest. Be steady. Avoid jealousy and selfishness. Be obedient and eternally faithful to the cause of truth, humanity, and your country and you will move the world.

The dry, abstract Advaita must become living—poetic—in everyday life; out of hopelessly intricate mythology must come concrete moral forms; and out of bewildering Yogiism must come the most scientific and practical psychology—and all this must be put in a form so that a child may grasp it. That is my life's work.

Take courage and work on. Patience and steady work—this is the only way. Go on; remember—patience and purity and courage and steady work. So long as you are pure, and true to your principles, you will never fail. Mother ‘will never leave you and all blessings will be yours.

Love makes no distinction between man and man, between an Aryan and a Mlechchha, between a Brahmana and a Pariah, nor even between a man and a woman. Love makes the whole universe as one’s own home. True progress is slow but sure. Work among those young men who can devote heart and soul to this one duty—the duty of raising the masses of India. Awake them, unite them, and inspire them with this spirit of renunciation. It depends wholly on the young people of India.



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